

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Previously Presented) An ink tank for an ink-jet printing apparatus comprising:

- (i) an ink container containing an ink;
- (ii) an ink inlet for introducing an ink to the ink container; and
- (iii) an air outlet for making the ink container under negative pressure in cooperation with the ink-jet printing apparatus, an ink being introduced to the ink container through the ink inlet when negative pressure is applied to the ink container,

wherein the ink tank further comprises gas-liquid separation means which does not pass liquid but gas at the air outlet, and wherein the ink has surface tension of 28 mN/m or higher but not higher than 50 mN/m; and wherein

an inner surface of the ink container has been subjected to a surface processing.

2. (Original) The ink tank according to claim 1, wherein the gas-liquid separation means comprises a porous material.

3. (Original) The ink tank according to claim 2, wherein the porous material is a porous resin material.

4. (Original) The ink tank according to claim 3, wherein the porous resin material is a tetrafluoroethylenc resin.

5. (Original) The ink tank according to claim 2, wherein the porous material is selected from the group consisting of unglazed porcelain, earthenware and ceramics.

6. (Currently Amended) The ink tank according to claim 1, wherein the ink tank contains an ink absorbing member capable of absorbing and holding the ink in the ~~ink~~ ink container.

7. (Original) The ink tank according to claim 6, wherein the ink tank has a space between the gas-liquid separation means and the ink absorbing member.

8. (Cancelled)

9. (Previously Presented) The ink tank according to claim 1, where the surface processing is a water-repellent processing.

10. (Previously Presented) The ink tank according to claim 1, wherein the ink tank further comprises an ink outlet for discharging the ink in the ink container to the outside.

11. (Original) The ink tank according to claim 10, wherein an ink-jet recording head capable of ejecting the ink is connected to the ink outlet.

12. (Original) The ink tank according to claim 1, wherein the ink has surface tension of 35 mN/m or higher and not higher than 50 mN/m.

13. (Original) An ink cartridge comprising an ink tank of claim 1 and an ink-jet recording head for ejecting an ink in the ink tank.

14. (Previously Presented) An ink cartridge comprising an ink tank of claim 1 and an ink-jet recording head for ejecting the ink in the ink tank, wherein the ink-jet recording head is connected to an ink outlet of the ink tank.

15. (Previously Presented) An ink system comprising:  
a first ink tank comprising an ink tank according to Claim 1;  
an ink supply device for providing ink to said first ink tank, the ink supply device comprising:

(i) a second ink tank for storing the ink to be introduced to the ink container of the first ink tank;

(ii) means for connecting the second ink tank with the ink inlet of the first ink tank; and

(iii) means for reducing a pressure in the ink container of the first ink tank through the air outlet of the first ink tank when the second ink tank is connected to the ink inlet of the first tank.

16. (Original) The ink supply device according to claim 15, wherein the connection means comprises an ink supply path communicated to the second ink tank, and a joint at an end of the ink supply path, the joint being connectable to the ink inlet of the first ink tank.

17. (Previously Presented) The ink supply device according to claim 16, wherein the ink inlet of the first ink tank is provided with a hollow needle, and the ink is introduced from the second ink tank to the ink container through the needle and wherein the joint connects to the needle.

18. (Original) The ink supply device according to claim 15, wherein the pressure reducing means comprises a suction pump to reduce a pressure in the ink container through the air outlet.

19. to 24. (Cancelled)

25. (Currently Amended) An ink tank for an ink-jet printing apparatus, comprising

(i) an ink container containing an ink;  
(ii) an ink inlet for introducing an ink to the ink container; and  
(iii) an air outlet for making the ink container under negative pressure in cooperation with the ink-jet printing apparatus, an ~~ink~~ ink being introduced to the ink container through the ink inlet when negative pressure is applied to the ink container;

wherein an inner surface of the ink container has been subjected to a surface processing; and.

wherein the ink tank further comprises a gas-liquid separation means which does not pass liquid but gas at the air outlet, and wherein the ink contains a surfactant in an amount of 1 wt % or less based on the total ink weight.

26. to 33. (Cancelled)